

1900.

NEW ZEALAND.

PACIFIC ISLANDS:

LETTER FROM THE PREMIER TO THE BRITISH RESIDENT AT RAROTONGA RELATIVE TO AN
AUXILIARY SCHOONER.*Laid upon the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.*

SIR,—

Rarotonga, 8th June, 1900.

Prior to leaving I received a letter which was written by Mr. Percy Brown, and you too mentioned the matter to me, and in going through the islands the native chiefs have also brought under my notice the necessity there is for communication being established by means of a vessel—say, belonging to the Cook Islands authorities—going round at regular intervals collecting fruits and produce, and delivering mails and goods, also carrying passengers. That such a tender would be of immense benefit to the islands all must admit—in fact, it seems to be a necessity. The question naturally arises, How is this to be accomplished? After considering the matter over, and subject to the ratification by my colleagues, I shall be prepared to favourably entertain a proposal, if submitted by the Cook Islands authorities, to the effect that an auxiliary schooner, fitted with oil-engines, of a given capacity be purchased, the capital to be found by the New Zealand Government, secured on the vessel, and having the security of the Cook Islands authorities. The vessel to be insured in the name and by the New Zealand Government. The cost of the insurance, interest, and working-expenses to be defrayed by the Cook Islands authorities. In case of a dispute about the maximum rate of freight between traders it is to be submitted to the New Zealand Government, and in the case of a dispute as to fixing freights and passenger rates the New Zealand Government is to be consulted and to have the final decision. A statement of accounts to be made periodically to the Governor of New Zealand. In return for the advance made by the New Zealand Government, the preference—should at any time the carrying-capacity of the vessel not be sufficient to take all the goods offering—in such case is to be given to produce to be shipped to New Zealand, or for goods coming from New Zealand. This is the only return that the New Zealand Government would have for assisting the Cook Islands authorities in respect to this matter. As to details, one of the matters I find complained of is that oftentimes perishable articles, such as fruit, are thrown on one side, whilst lime-juice and non-perishable articles are brought away in the vessels.

I have, &c.,

The British Resident, Rarotonga.

R. J. SEDDON.

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